

Sam Tracy  
Public Testimony regarding Proposed HB 6163

Members of the Government Administration and Elections Committee,

My name is Sam Tracy and I am a lifetime resident of South Windsor, CT. I am currently a student at the University of Connecticut, where I am studying political science. I am also a member of our school's student government, and have worked at the polls multiple times.

I strongly support HB 6163, which would join Connecticut into the agreement between states to award their votes in the Electoral College to whichever presidential candidate wins the nationwide popular vote. I support this for many reasons, but mainly because it is a step towards getting rid of the unethical system of the Electoral College.

The Electoral College was created by the Founders for understandable reasons, and actually made a lot of sense at the time. In the late 1700s, communication was obviously very restricted compared to today. According to a 1992 paper titled *The Electoral College*, written by William C. Kimberling, Deputy Director of the Federal Election Commission's Office of Election Administration, "Direct election was rejected not because the Framers of the Constitution doubted public intelligence but rather because they feared that without sufficient information about candidates from outside their State, people would naturally vote for a "favorite son" from their own State or region. At worst, no president would emerge with a popular majority sufficient to govern the whole country. At best, the choice of president would always be decided by the largest, most populous States with little regard for the smaller ones." This was a reasonable concern in any era of incredibly limited communication, but is obviously not an issue today. We are a nation united by television, internet, and many other means of communicating the ideas of different political candidates. I know few, if any, people who would vote for someone based on where they are from – people vote on whether they agree with someone or not.

Please keep in mind that these are the same Founders who wanted the United States Senate appointed by state legislatures rather than elected and prevented anyone but property-owning white males from voting. While they possessed great foresight and created a great system of government, they were products of their time – and were smart enough to know that. The Founders purposefully allowed state legislatures to decide how to distribute their votes in the Electoral College, so that the system could be changed without requiring national action. They wanted us to have the power to change the Electoral College to a system that fits our values. One that is democratic and respects the wishes of the majority of Americans.

I would also like to take a moment to address an argument I have heard in Connecticut in opposition to this bill. It is merely political, and is irrelevant in comparison to the noble goal of making our nation more democratic, but I have heard it repeatedly and would like to refute it. Some claim that the Electoral College benefits small states like Connecticut, as we are awarded slightly more sway than we would under a National Popular Vote (which is obviously unfair). However, this is untrue. The Electoral College does not benefit small states – it benefits battleground states. This can be seen in the number of campaign stops and the amount of

campaign funds allocated to each state. Safe states, including small ones like Connecticut and large ones like Texas, receive little attention on the campaign trail. It's considered a given who they will be voting for, so candidates instead focus on battleground states, no matter their size. This can be seen in the example of New Hampshire, which is a rather small state but is difficult to predict as to whether it will go Democratic or Republican. Therefore, candidates spend a lot of time there trying to sway voters. A national popular vote would get rid of that unfair preference towards battleground states, and would allow for more equal campaigning nationwide, bringing attention to safe states like Connecticut.

So, please, pass this bill. It will make Connecticut a driving force in a national push to make our nation more democratic, and will help restore citizens' faith in government. When the candidate with the most votes does not become president, the people lose faith in the government and the president loses credibility. This has happened 4 times out of the country's 55 presidential elections – a failure rate of 1 out of 14. We cannot allow this to happen again, and HB 6163 will work to prevent that.

Thank you,

Sam Tracy